1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

donkey. Now we[1] can get the Athens newspapers on the same day they are published, whereas before they would always be at least two days late and frequently more. We have no illiterates here, so many subscribe to these papers.

Considerable insight into what living on a good road means was gained from talking with mountain people who had been resettled in the lowlands away from their destroyed villages. One woman mentioned the advantages with little hesitation, beginning with the access to medical treatment mentioned above: "Here medical care is available because of the road. If a child gets appendicitis, he can get to a doctor in time; in our village up above he would have died. Also woman's work is lighter here. The children are better off. They can go to the school right here in the village whereas in our location up above they had to walk from two to three hours every day."

A commandant of police brought out some interesting examples of what a road means to a village by comparing his community, which got a road ten years before, with another community not far away which was not yet on a road:

> The road brought many economic changes. For instance, my father had three hundred cherry trees which he had never bothered to fence in, prune, or tend in any way. Anybody could come and eat the fruit; they would break the branches. But when the road was built, my father fenced in the land and sold the cherries. The income began coming in. Also, it was a disgrace in our village to sell a chicken, but when the road came the women began to sell both eggs and chickens. This meant more income. Eggs in the village without a road sell for half the price obtained by the women in my village. This holds true for all products.
>
> In the village without a road you would have a hard time finding a man with enough cash to buy a candle to light in church, while in my village people always seem to have some cash. In the other village each farmer needs a donkey for transportation and will spend about two thousand drachmas a year just for the upkeep of the donkey; in our village we do not need donkeys because we can use the trucks at much less expense.
>
> Politically, too, roads make a difference. The candidates for parliament seldom get to the villages off the road but try to visit the rest; the same holds true for government officials in position to help in agriculture or other ways. They stick pretty much to the villages which they can easily reach.

The roads that lead into and out of the plateia do more than bring in the welcome buses, trucks, and occasional private cars; they bring in new services, new ideas, better teachers, and increased economic opportunities. People begin to feel that their village has moved from the shadow of isolation into the Greek sunlight.

[1] [i.e., the village of Tsepelovo - Analyst.]

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Thessaly

Another village in Thessaly tackled this crucial problem of strip holdings in its own way. This village, Nees Karyes, south of Larissa on the main road to Lamia, was another place the director of agriculture wished to visit. On our way there we picked up the agriculturist who, like a county agent, had been the chief adviser to the peasants while they were planning their successful scheme. He recounted the development of the program as we drove to the village. The people of Nees Karyes, like those of Thomai, were also refugees, but they had come to Greece much earlier, in 1907, from Eastern Roumelia, now a part of Bulgaria. Otherwise, they were ordinary villagers, some with more land, some with less. It was the peasants with less who devised a plan.

After World War II, they realized that they could no longer make ends meet with what they had. In May 1952 twenty-three of the men with the smallest holdings in the village came together to talk about what would happen if they pooled their farms and other resources. The land of these 23 families totaled about 575 acres, showing an average per family below that for the other 200 families in the village, but well above the figure for Thessaly. They talked and talked, swapped ideas and contacted the agricultural-extension agent in Larissa. In October 1952 they held their first assembly. They decided to buy a tractor and to follow the advice of the agricultural specialist as to improved methods, type of seed, kind of equipment needed. They decided to combine the 575 acres for production purposes into one farm. The various types of soil are now used to best advantage. Fortunately, the first year had been a good crop year and successes far outstripped expectations. The cooperative into which they organized themselves bought a combine for 60,000 drachmas ($4,000 at the rate of exchange in 1952). But since they would have had to pay out five sixths of that to others as charges for harvesting their grain, they are in reality only 10,000 drachmas ($667) in debt, and sure of the future.

Since this idea of pooling land sounded so much like a collective farm on the Communist model, the government carefully investigated to be sure no subversive influences were at work before it granted any loans. The planners proved to be far from subversive, merely independent peasants with a common-sense approach to an old, old problem.

Our first stop in the village was at a big brick-walled granary almost completed by the cooperative. There we talked with the villager who was the cooperative's secretary. He paid great tribute to the part the government agricultural worker had played in the success of their undertaking. While we fingered the heaped golden grain on the cement floor of the impressive building, I asked, "What made you begin this cooperative in the first place?" The answer was a single eloquent word: "Necessity."

The founders of this cooperative, the twenty-three village families with

1:Sanders Z-5/1 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Macedonia

241 before they left had cleaned us out and we had nothing with which to do our farming. I tried to get into a technical school, for there isn't enough work for me to do here; I also tried to get into a factory in Salonica but the same favoritism worked there."

He looked bitter and tired.

"Did you sell your tobacco for a good price?"

[426] "Yes, I did get 7,000 drachmas for my tobacco but I was already 5,500 drachmas in debt. And for the crop I am now putting in I'm already heavily [435] in debt. What does the price of tobacco matter when sugar is going up from 16 to 20 drachmas an oka? Today there is not an oka of sugar in Al- [464] strate for use in case of sickness. There is unemployment, not enough fields; we can't rent any more land, for soil is too expensive. How can I live? If I could, I would emigrate anywhere. I don't care where. It would be a better life."

This young peasant's dark view of his world in 1953 was due to much more than the fact that he had only one horse and had to wait restlessly while a neighbor was using it in a team. He was representative of the young village people who are uprooted because of lack of economic opportunity at home or elsewhere and who become psychologically dispossessed. No matter how willing they are to work, or how hard they do work, they have neither enough bread nor enough security.

Not far down the road we stopped to talk to an elderly couple who, with [249] one of their three unmarried daughters, were chopping out the weeds from [273] around the anise plants (anise is used for flavoring ouzo, a popular and [412] potent alcoholic drink in Greece). They were using short-handled hoes, a fact that led to a discussion of their farming methods which more nearly resembled those of their ancient forebears than those of the twentieth century. The description of a Greek village in an UNRRA publication just after World War II might well have been describing them, although the old couple got most of their income from tobacco rather than grain:

[407] [412] Plows are the major implements used. Crops are cultivated by hand with hoes and harvested with the sickle or corn knife. Grain is threshed by driving livestock over it and the chaff is separated by tossing in the wind. The method of seeding is to plow the land, scatter the seed and plow again. Sometimes the seed is dropped in the furrow and covered by the succeeding furrow. The rate of seeding is very high and at least one-third more seed than necessary is sown. [462] Primitive methods of cultivation result in many long days being spent in the fields by the women and children — an average of 250 days per year. Often the women carry their babies and small children to the fields and watch over them while working.[1]

Although this old couple complained about not having enough food, showing us that they had only bread and water in their bag, nevertheless

1:Sanders Z-54 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Thessaly

acres a day with a tractor. "Before the war," he went on to say, "a peasant who tried something new was considered an amusing person with a loose screw in his head. Even the agriculturists were received with 'what have those educated people got to tell us who have callouses from working?' Also, the agriculturist has learned more about agriculture and more about people, changing for the better."

The director's wife agreed with what we had learned from Alekos about the effect of mechanization upon woman's work. She did point out that machine harvesting and threshing had relieved the housewife of an old burden of feeding many people for long periods of time when the work was done by hand. However, the women still plant tobacco and cultivate cotton. Men are helping out a little more, but this hard field work in Thessaly is still a woman's job. Here again there is some compensation for the women. Although they have as much work now as before, they have more money. They will change into better dresses in the evening and go for a walk on a weekday, something much less common before the last war. Finally, the director's wife pointed out, those families who own twenty to twenty-five acres of land have acquired ease and prosperity and are becoming a well-to-do peasantry.

Elsewhere around Larissa we inquired about the spread of mechanization. The tractor dealers in the town put Alekos' problems in a somewhat different light. We learned, for example, that a 46-horsepower tractor, with starter and pneumatic tire wheels, cost 55,000 drachmas ($3,667); the purchaser had to pay 40 percent in cash and could sign a bill for the remaining 60 percent, payable after 18 months to the Bank of Greece at the rate of 16 percent interest. Dealers and some of the local government officials considered this rate most oppressive.

A second problem was that of spare parts, most of which had to be imported. Foreign-exchange difficulties and import restrictions make this difficult; when the parts were not available, the owner of the tractor was greatly inconvenienced, to put it mildly. We got some idea of the problem of spare parts when we learned that there were 25 dealers of tractors of different makes in Larissa alone. The dealers attempted to teach the purchasers how to use the machine and, a year or so before, the government had set up traveling schools which instructed in the operation and care of the tractor and afterwards gave examinations for licenses. That year, out of 1,200 farm workers examined, only 700 were given a license.

Dealers also indicated that the buyer of a tractor usually ordered a plow and a disk-harrow, with many requesting grain drills. This equipment adds greatly to the total cost. Most of the tractors were bought by individuals or by a group of three to five peasants, with only twenty to twenty-five tractors belonging to cooperatives.

In the tractor land of Larissa everything seems fine now. As in the case

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Thrace

land but work rented land or as farm laborers; and three are in business (baker, coffeehouse proprietor, and dressmaker). Some of these landowners, in addition to farming, run a local business, or practice a trade such as carpentering and smithing, but their basic orientation is toward the land.

Being farmers, one might assume that they could grow some of their own food. A few manage to do this. Of the 589 acres of cultivated land belonging to the village people, 338 acres are in tobacco. This cash crop, therefore, takes up about 57 percent of all arable land. Corn accounts for 187 acres, vegetable gardens 25 acres, potatoes 20 acres, alfalfa 6 acres, and other crops 13 acres. But no matter what methods one uses in Dafnon, it is impossible to grow enough food for 1145 people on the shallow land. There are two ways out: first, grow a cash crop such as tobacco, sell it, and use the income to buy food and other necessities; the second is for a large number of families to be resettled elsewhere and thus provide sufficient land for those that remain. The latter suggestion is impossible, since other rural areas are also overcrowded and the opportunities in the cities are not yet equal to the demand of those making the exodus from the rural areas. Indeed, cities have been discouraging the influx of new families in search of work.

This leaves only the other possibility of getting most of the family income from tobacco alone. Here, again, the tobacco producer is caught at the mercy of the market or in the "price scissors." Without food of his own production, he has to sell his tobacco at any price offered simply in order to have bread for his children. The producer, according to this study of Dafnon, knew that tobacco prices, including the premium paid by the state, had risen over prewar prices 260 times. This was small consolation for, in reading *Vema*, an Athenian newspaper dated December 14, 1951, he also learned that costs of foodstuffs had risen 425 times, clothing 554 times, fuel 394 times, sundries 367 times, manufactured goods 467 times, and imported supplies 416 times.

It is difficult to grow tobacco, particularly the Oriental type (Basmas variety) that requires so much manipulation, leaf by leaf, with an average leaf being four inches long and two and one-half inches wide. The first plowing is usually done in February or March. Seedbeds are heavily manured, and the seed is well mixed with sand and ashes, then sown. The beds are pressed down by foot for better germination; sieved manure is scattered over them; and the beds are watered. This watering is continued, usually morning and evening, until the end of May when the plants are ready to be transplanted. Because of this need for water, the beds are always located near some accessible water supply.

The tobacco fields are usually plowed under three times before the tobacco plants are set out. The same fields are used for tobacco year after

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

How strong are cooperatives in Greece today? In 1957, they numbered 7,127 and had a membership of 718,000.[9] They therefore constitute the principal farm organization in Greece. Those who lead the cooperative movement are quick to point out what they hope to achieve: to narrow the ratio between prices received by the farmers and prices paid by the farmers; to market members' products and purchase for them equipment and supplies; to process farm commodities, produce pesticides, farm machinery; and to provide special services for members such as plowing, cultivating, and harvesting.[10] Since many of the Greek farmers are too impoverished to raise sufficient capital on their own to finance a local cooperative, they are therefore dependent upon those cooperatives for which the government, through the Agricultural Bank, provides all the funds and over which it insists on centralized control.

How the Villagers View Cooperatives

What the FAO study team, the American missioners, and even the Greek government officials think about agricultural cooperatives is secondary to what the Greek peasants themselves think. Their opinions ranged all the way from those of open resentment and hostility to those of great pride in local cooperative achievements. To be told, as was mentioned in Chapter 5, that some villagers whom we wanted to see had hid upon our arrival, for they thought that we were either cooperative officials or connected with the Agricultural Bank, was an object lesson in itself. We asked one of them why he had run away. He replied: "I still owe the Bank a great deal. We have to pay 9 percent interest on what we borrow, 1 percent to the cooperative and 8 percent to the Bank. Last year I hadn't paid off my loan ($70.), so I couldn't get a new loan. I borrowed what I needed from a private individual at 20 percent and paid off this loan to the bank so that I could obtain potato seed on a new loan. Now I have sold my potatoes and the Bank will be after me to pay them what I owe."

When we asked what happened to people who did not repay their loans, we were told that in such cases the collector came out, wrangled with the people, and if he received no repayment took them to court. To such villagers, cooperatives were chiefly credit agencies and in no sense stood for a local association of farmers pooling their energies and resources to achieve joint goals.

Now and then we found peasants who were anxious to start a cooperative but considered the initiation difficult. In a village near Megalopolis in the Peloponnesos, the people were well aware of the difference between prices received in the village for watermelons and what such products cost in Athens. Like farmers everywhere, they thought the price differences unjust. They blamed bureaucratic red tape for holding up the establishment of a cooperative. Some of the more dubious went on to say: "Even if we do

1:Sanders Z-5,¥ (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Although not all of these taxes apply directly to villages, some of them do. Mention has already been made of the personal work on community projects, as well as the tax on sale and purchase of cattle as evidence by the Neochori notice of bids for farming these out. In addition, there is a "head" tax ranging from twenty to fifty cents annually on each animal. A list of animals over two years of age is drawn up in March, or three months before the commune budget is due. Perhaps the most important of these revenues from the peasant point of view is the tax of 2 to 4 percent on his agricultural products, which the local government keeps. He pays this in lieu of a property tax on the land that he owns. When I explained to some of my Greek friends that property taxes were the chief source of revenue for many local governments in America, they asked if I meant agricultural land. When I answered in the affirmative, they were nonplussed and pointed out that it was much fairer to tax the products of the land than the land itself, since the products showed best of all the value of the land.

The Village and the Central Government

To understand the community council, one must see its relationship with the central government.[10] It does not, for instance, undertake to maintain law and order, since the local police are not under its jurisdiction, nor does it have much to say about its local school, except through an elected school board of limited powers. Even in those affairs where it is supposed to have jurisdiction, such as drawing up its own budget or arranging for the collection of taxes, it has to gain the approval of the nomarch, who is appointed by the Minister of Interior.

Only as I got to know some of the nomarchs did I begin to appreciate the relationship of the central to the local governments. One nomarch, Yannes Gotsis, was in charge of the nomos of Serrai in Macedonia in 1953. He seemed dedicated to his task and epitomized several of the qualities I have come to admire in many Greeks. We discussed the specifics of local government and the part that the nomarch plays, but he soon went beyond the technicalities of administration to something of its philosophy:

> In the majority of the Greeks there is a submerged desire to make a better future for as many people as possible. The Greek really wants a better community life, although he at times gives the impression that conflict is his basic urge. But along with his sense of community he has an appreciation for human personality, which means that if another person disagrees with him he does not try by force to get his own opinion accepted; he tries persuasion and explanation. If others continue to disagree, it is not because they fail to appreciate him but because they each have their own personality to put to the use of the community.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

178 Closely related to a family head's economic predicament is the demand
241 for, and therefore the price of, the cash crops that he grows. The tobacco
594 farmer of Northern Greece, the peasant growing olives on Mount Pelion
near Thessaly, the apple grower in western Macedonia around Phlorina, and
the producer of currents in the northern Peloponnesos are familiar with the
● [435] ups and downs of the world markets. When he shifts from wheat to cotton or
rice, the farmer makes more than an economic decision; he also determines
much about family relationships in his home. Growing wheat calls for a
very different participation of the woman than does the cultivation of rice
in irrigated fields. In the latter case, the farmer also has to submit himself
[312] to the organizational control that the use of irrigated water necessitates,
[476] being ready to divert the stream into his own fields when his neighbor has
used the allotted time for watering his fields. With his neighbors, too, he
must cooperate to keep drainage ditches clear, unless this can be turned
over to some governmental agency. Or, if a family shifts from sheep rais-
[233] ing to settled farming, the fate of the children is apt to be different. In caring
[857] for sheep the children are an important economic asset, which keeps them
away from the house for several hours during the day and even away from
school for two or three years.

178 Social change of the drifting, unplanned sort can be observed among the
626 young people as well. On a Sunday afternoon a young man recently re-
183 turned from the army may go up to a young woman in the promenade on
the village square and ask if he can walk with her. This may be the first
time that any young man has made this maneuver in this village. The other
young people watch with almost unbelieving eyes and, if they see that no
serious social consequences are visited upon the innovator, may eventually
themselves get around to pairing off. Village opinion, too, may be in for a
start when a father and his grown son, perhaps because they want to con-
tinue the discussion of some economic transaction in which they are in-
volved, go to sit together in a coffeehouse where it has never been customary
before for sons to sit with their fathers. Indeed, as pointed out earlier, the
practice may be that sons are not even to enter the coffeehouse where the
fathers go. Now and then, particularly in the past, innovators of this sort
have experienced unpleasant social pressures of many kinds, which may
even have stopped them from trying to change local customs. Today, there
is such social ferment, such a mixing of traditional and modern roles, that
much more individual variability is permitted.

178 Several times I asked Greek friends who were familiar with village life
369 whether the villager was more apt to imitate what he saw in Athens or what
602 he saw in a provincial town. In other words, I wondered if the changes
emanating from the city were mediated by the townspeople who lived nearer
the villager and in whose community the villager felt more at home. These

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

000 the British Admiralty, 1930); and M. L. Newbigin, *Southern Europe: A Regional and Economic Geography of the Mediterranean Lands* (3rd ed., London, 1949).

3. One still finds many similarities between the peasants of Hesiod's time (see his "Works and Days") and those of today.

4. Many allusions to nature are found in the passionate novel about the Communist guerrilla war by Panos D. Bardis, *Ivan and Artemis* (New York, 1957).

5. "The Holy Virgin's Hand" is mentioned on p. 123 of G. F. Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore* (Cambridge, Eng., 1903). This book gives a number of examples of the peasants' use of and adaptation to nature.

6. For a delightful essay on the flowers of Greece, see "Flowers of Ancient Greece," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 23, 1954.

7. For an earlier account of peasant cosmological beliefs, see the article by N. G. Politis in *Attikon Emerologion* (1882); also G. Kapsalis, "Meteorologikes paroimiakes Phraseis" (Meteorological Proverbial Phrases), *Laographia*, XIII (1950).

8. One of the most authentic documents on Greek village life came into my hands through a mutual acquaintance of T. K. Papaspyropoulos, the author. This account is in Greek typescript, from which the passages used in my book have been translated with the permission of the author. Mr. Papaspyropoulos teaches singing in one of Athens' secondary schools and has specialized in folk music. I accompanied him on a visit to his village, where I had a chance to observe at first hand many of the sights he so colorfully describes.

[875] [123]

9. A very common phrase among the peasants is *Ean thelē o Theos* (If God is willing), to which one replies *Vevea, prota o Theos* (Yes, of course, first God).

10. Interesting observations on the use in Homer of the ancient Greek terms *atē* (divine temptation or infatuation, cause of irrational actions) and *moira* (portion or lot) are found in E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951).

11. The facts and figures used in this section are taken in large part from *Report of the FAO Mission for Greece* (Washington, 1947), and *Story of the American Marshall Plan in Greece, July 1, 1948 to Jan. 1, 1952*, Press Release No. 1300, MSA (Athens, July 20, 1952).

12. For the problem of soil erosion, see Constantine I. Nevros, "Soil Erosion in Greece," *Soil Conservation, VI* (1940), and F. G. Renner, "Erosion, Trojan Horse of Greece," *National Geographic*, December 1947. For forestry, see W. Miller, *Greek Town and Country Life* (London, 1905), pp. 229–232.

13. E. G. Mariolopoulos and A. N. Livathinos, in *Atlas climatique de la Grèce* (Athens, 1935), give a good description of the Greek climate.

14. For two views on the sun (Helios) and St. Elias, see the articles by N. G. Politis in *Laographika Symmikta B'* (1921), and E. Rein, "Zu der Verehrung des Propheten Elias bei den Neugriechen," *Öfversigt af Finska Vetenskaps-Societetens Förhandlingar*, XLVII (1904–1905).

15. Percy F. Martin, *Greece of the Twentieth Century* (London, 1913), pp. 267–68, discusses the company-tenant relations worked out at Lake Kopais as of 1913.

[427]

16. One friend wrote in 1959: "Fresh fish has always been expensive. Earlier this winter there was a sudden 50 percent price rise. We ourselves cannot afford fresh fish and buy frozen fish brought in by Greek boats from the Atlantic, which is now available in many parts of Greece. It is a scandal that abundant fresh fish at reasonable prices is not available to the Greeks."

●[435]

17. This gorgon is really a sea nymph or mermaid (*gorgona* in modern Greek) and not one of the classical gorgons of terrifying aspect (Medusa and her sisters).

18. Elias Venezis, *Aeolia*, trans. from the Greek by E. D. Scott-Kilvert (London, 1949), p. 94.

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

period of at least two months. Women are again hired to do the job. But this time, the women from Vasilika and from the neighboring villages who had been free to do the hoeing are not necessarily free to spend away from home the prolonged period required for picking. The local women can and do hire out when they are free, but they can be free only sporadically, for their own fields also need some attention every day, even if their cotton production is not extensive. Therefore, the intermittent wage labor of the neighborhood women is augmented by labor from more distant regions where no cotton is grown, and where the early fall is therefore a slack season in the agricultural cycle. In 1955, six Vasilika farmers took the train to Trikala (near Larissa) and brought back with them thirty women who then worked in Vasilika for almost two months. Each of the farmers took responsibility for five or six women; he paid their round trip fare, put them up in his home, and furnished them with food. As a net wage, he paid them for picking the cotton in his fields one to two drachmas per *oka* (one *oka* equals two and eight-tenths pounds) of cotton picked. A serious, mature worker can regularly pick about forty *okadhes* a day.

In the picking season the farmer's main concern is to finish the job before the winter rains set in. If prolonged rains come early, the value of the cotton is lowered, and the processing of it involves additional expense. If the cotton has to be picked while it is still damp, it must be picked with the pod, and later must be separated from the pod by hand. The farmers paid hired workers a drachma per *oka* for the job.

While the women are picking cotton, the men of the household weigh the filled bags, keep records of the amount each woman picks, and use the horses, donkeys, or mules to haul the cotton from the fields. It is stored in the stone barns, in the lower storage rooms of the houses, and, as a matter of fact, when other space is no longer available, in any room in the house. Trucks from the cotton gins in Levadhia come through the village and collect the cotton. Farmers keep track of the weight of cotton they send to be ginned but do not identify their own sacks. The ginning costs six percent of the original weight of the cotton, a percentage which the gin owner keeps for himself. The farmers use the seed returned to them for the next year's planting, and also have some of it pressed into cakes for use as supplementary fodder for the ewes at lambing time. The cotton itself is again stored in sacks to await sale to merchants who visit the villages. During the season, the cotton is also used as a medium of exchange. Itinerant vendors selling fish or oranges, for example, are willing to take raw cotton instead of cash in payment.

The price at which the farmers sell the cotton to the merchants is never high enough to satisfy the farmers, who feel they get a disproportionately small share of the ultimate value of the cotton. We were once host to some urban visitors and to some of the village's leading men. In the course of the afternoon a heated and eloquent discussion on cotton prices developed. The farmers contended that by the time they paid the costs for machinery, fuel, hired labor, and calculated, in addition, the value of the labor of the members of their households, they made scarcely any profit at all on the cotton. The visitors, on the other hand, insisted that it was wrong to include the labor of their households as part of the

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

cost because for the women, in particular, work on the farm was a way of life. "After all, what else would they do?" the visitors contended.

The discussion was extraordinarily illuminating because of the clarity with which it defined the villagers' overt conception of their own purpose in farming. The Vasilika men were thinking of their farms as commercial enterprises and were applying to their operation, however unwittingly, modern cost accounting principles whereby the labor of members of a family is a proper charge against profits in a family enterprise. The Vasilika farmers do not actually keep sets of books on their farming operations, but they do keep records, in an unsystematic way, of some transactions. Even though they do not keep exact accounts, they think of their agricultural activity as a business enterprise and evaluate the success or failure of their family farms in monetary terms. The visitors, in contrast, were recommending that Vasilika's farmers think of themselves as peasants, not as entrepreneurs. In other words, the visitors were suggesting that farming in the Boeotian countryside is a way of life. They meant that its satisfactions should come as much from the means as from the ends. For the women, at least, the visitors contended, work in the fields and in the subsidiary agricultural tasks was as good a way to pass the time as any other and that their work was merely one aspect of their roles as wives and daughters. The farmers said, in effect, that their women were performing specialized agricultural tasks primarily as a means to an end, the end of earning a profit from the operation of the family farm. Therefore, contended the farmers, when women do agricultural jobs, they are properly considered as agricultural labor, like the hired workers with which the households ordinarily supplement their manpower.

The villagers' arguments were entirely consistent with their behavior. To accept machinery and chemical aids which increase yields and save time, as Vasilika's farmers have done, presumes that they place a value both on quantity of production and also on man-hours of work. In other words, they run their farms, at least partly, from the standpoint of rational economic efficiency. Actual accomplishment of efficiency is far from complete in Vasilika. Our point here has to do with attitudes and tendencies.

The tobacco crop gives an even greater cash yield than cotton in relation to the investment, and its cycle of production fits well into otherwise slack periods. Vasilika's farmers would prefer to raise more tobacco, but the acreage devoted to this plant is centrally controlled by the Greek government. Each year, farmers are assigned the right to plant a specific number of *stremata* to tobacco, with the variations dependent on the anticipated world market for the crop.

Men plow tobacco fields in November at about the same time and in the same way as they do the wheat fields. In December, the men prepare the frames for the tobacco seed beds, and the women plant and tend the seeds. The seed beds are usually near the farmer's house. During this month, the canes which will later be used for hanging the tobacco are cut and stored. The villagers use burlap lightly stretched over reed frames to protect the seedlings from the cold

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 463 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

help in the care of fruit trees that the provincial government had arranged to plant on the highway near the village.

The farmers are willing to try some variations if they can use the techniques they know and understand. Cotton prices had been low in 1958. In 1959, therefore, about four or five of Vasilika's farmers planted some of their cotton lands as melon patches, intending to sell the produce in Levadhia or in Athens. By 1961, they had gone back to raising cotton, because the experiment had failed. One of Vasilika's farmers prefers to use his irrigated land as a truck farm, and he and his son sell the produce in the surrounding villages. He argues that with a vegetable crop the cash returns are faster and he incurs fewer debts.

Livestock

Each of the farm-owning households also maintains some animals. One or two horses, a mule or a donkey, some five to twenty sheep, and one or two goats constitute the range of livestock ownership for each household. The horses, as we have seen, pull the plow and the cultivators in the fields. Together with the mules and donkeys, they also serve as pack animals. The pack saddle of wood and leather is of a design that has remained virtually unchanged from Homeric times. It is used not only for carrying loads, but also for carrying people who ride sidesaddle among the paths, through the fields, and between the villages. Sidesaddle is the normal riding position for both men and women, but in the spring, when the horses are let out to pasture on the hillside, the young men of the village sometimes ride them home bareback, astride, galloping and whooping in what they call *kaonboi* fashion.

The villagers do not give their animals individual names, and they take no particular care to keep them physically comfortable. They will hitch them in the shade of a tree in the fields if that is possible, but the farmers may not remove the saddles for an entire day. The animals are beaten with switches and kicked to make them work, and children are permitted to tease donkeys. Nevertheless, the villagers occasionally pat one of their beasts and sometimes encourage children to kiss the ears of a horse and to feed it a lump of sugar.

Sheep, except for the lambs, are cared for by the shepherds. Of a hardy mountain breed capable of surviving the rigors of Greek pasturage and climate, the sheep as milk and wool producers augment the food supply and sometimes the cash of the farmers. Sheep milk is rarely drunk in liquid form, but yoghurt and cheese are prepared from it. The white cheese is a staple of the villagers' diet. They eat yoghurt less frequently and prepare it only as a special dish in milk season.

The villagers raise a special lamb each year to slaughter at Easter, but otherwise rarely eat lamb or mutton. They will consume a sheep that dies of age or disease, and they slaughter sheep for some special occasion such as a wedding, or someone's name day. At shearing time, wool is boiled in large kettles, washed in the river, sent to town for carding, and then dyed and spun into thread at home by the women.

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

Specialization of Labor

Sheepherding as a specialty is relatively new to the village. Eight of Vasilika's ten shepherds and the members of their households are called *Vlachi* by the villagers. Most of these people come from Agrafa, in Euritania, in the northwestern part of the Greek mainland. Their fathers and grandfathers were shepherds, and the present group in Vasilika is the first generation ever to have settled anywhere with the intention and reasonable hope of staying. They augment the income from their own flocks by caring for those of the farmers as well.

From the point of view of the *Vlach* shepherd households headed by men (two are headed by widows), the settlement in Vasilika is a satisfactory change in their circumstances. In the years between 1950 and 1956, they had succeeded in building up their own flocks to the point where the sale of sheep, milk, and wool enabled them to have a small cash income to add to the money their women earned as hired agricultural labor. With a cash income, their diet no longer needed to be restricted largely to bread and cheese. The houses of the shepherds have improved since 1956. By 1961, all the shepherds' families were in houses instead of reed huts, and two of them were living in their own newly built one-room brick houses.

Perhaps most important to the shepherds' sense of well-being is that they have been admitted to citizenship in the *kinotis* of Vasilika, and that their children are receiving an education. The adult men had had to teach themselves and their children just enough reading and writing to be able to keep track of their commercial transactions through the year. Indeed, one shepherd, when asked what he thought about when he was out alone with his sheep, replied that he spent most of the time calculating how many sheep and how much milk to sell under the different possible price conditions of the coming season. What pleases the shepherds in Vasilika is that their children will have, as a result of a more formal education, some opportunities to follow a calling other than that of shepherd. In 1961, one of the shepherd's sons had already successfully completed a year at the gymnasium. Some of their daughters have married into the farm families of Vasilika, and even if these farmers are among the less prosperous in the village, such a marriage conveys prestige on the girl and her family in the eyes of the shepherd community.

Finally, the shepherds are grateful for the fact that several of them are settled in the same village and that it is possible for them sometimes to herd their flocks together. They are less lonely—they have company (*parea*)—and to have companions to talk to is considered a basic good by all the people of Vasilika.

In the first chapter, the movement of itinerant traders, vendors, artisans, and professionals into Vasilika was mentioned. The village has no resident carpenters, stonemasons, saddle-makers, barbers, tailors, or doctors; but the very existence of such specialists and the expectation that they will come from time to time, demonstrate an important characteristic of the household economy of

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 863 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

584 from the village or from the community of the prospective spouse, rather than a professional. On the groom's side, the father participates in the negotiations, but the prospective groom himself is present and active in the proceedings. His decision as to the minimum value of the dowry and the form in which he will accept it is the crucial one.

The dowry negotiations and the final marriage contract can be usefully discussed, therefore, as analogous to a commercial transaction in which each side tries to get the most value at the least cost. For the bride's father, the material 583 costs include the land and cash he must give as part of his daughter's dowry. 428 She is, of course, legally and customarily entitled to her share of the patrimony, 423 but except for the cash, the determination of just how much is her share is not easy to arrive at. A farmer, as we have seen, holds land in scattered parcels of different quality; some of the parcels are in the immediate vicinity of Vasilika, no more than an hour's walk away from the village; others may have been part of his wife's dowry and may, therefore, be near her village; his house has value, but since his daughter will not live with him, he cannot give her part of it. The problem is solved in Vasilika by making a rough estimate of the money value of the parents' property in terms of gold sovereigns (*lires*) and then determining how many *lires* a girl is entitled to. Since the end of the Greek Civil War in [436] 1949, the drachma has been stabilized, and the villagers as well as the rest of [454] the Greek population are gaining confidence in the currency. However, the belief that gold sovereigns, worth approximately $10 each in 1961, are the only trustworthy form of cash is still common in Greece, as is the hoarding of the sovereigns and the requirement that bills be paid in them. The villagers evaluate [435] property in terms of *lires* and always speak of a dowry as one of so many *lires*, regardless of whether the property transferred is cash or land or both.

593 Besides the property costs of the dowry, a farmer loses the labor of his 152 daughter both on the farm and in the household. Finally, there is an emotional cost to the parents, particularly to the mother, at the marriage of a daughter. A mother loses the companionship of a friend, a confidante, and a working partner [582] in the house and the fields. Among the more prosperous farmers, girls marry in their middle or late twenties. As a result mothers frequently have had many years of cooperation with grown daughters. The wrench at parting is seriously felt. Mothers in Vasilika openly lament the loss of their daughters and speak frequently of how much they miss their absent girls.

581 When a marriage is contemplated between families of equal wealth and 584 social position, for example, when the daughter of a farmer is being married to a man who expects to stay on his father's farm, and when his share of the farm has approximately the same value as what the girl brings in as a dowry, the negotiations are relatively straightforward. Each side can then limit itself to checking on the claims the other is making and to surveying the total situation. Is the yield of the land the girl is bringing what her father says it is? Will the son-in-law be entitled to the share of the land he claims he will have? Does the [593] boy have so many sisters that his father may die before they h.ve been married off leaving the boy with the responsibility of dowering them? Is the father-in-law's house well enough equipped so that the girl will be able to live at approxi-

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

None were then occupied by brothers; their occupants were second and third generation descendants of the brothers who had originally put in the wall. The houses showed the effects of the long separation. In one of the houses, one side has been inhabited by a branch of the family that is losing its lands; that side has no additions and is in poor repair. The descendants of the other brother have prospered and have added some rooms and a terrace to their side of the house. In another case, both parts of the house have been expanded and modernized but in different ways.

Vasilika's houses are not ordinarily large enough to be divided into more than two parts. If there are more than two brothers, or if the paternal house is small, another solution to the housing problem exists. Here, the brothers agree to refurnish the ancestral house which one of them will continue to inhabit, and to build, in addition, new houses to the number of the remaining farmer brothers. The significance of the agreement is that the cost of the new houses and the repair and modernization of the old will be borne by the patrimony. Moreover, the brothers do not decide in advance which one is to have which house. That decision is made by drawing lots after the new houses are habitable and the old one has been improved. In a sense, the brothers agree jointly to improve the father's estate before they take their shares. The process is not different from that involved when the men in a joint household buy land which is added to the estate and is eventually divided among them. The process of building the new houses takes years (in one case where two new houses were built, the actual work took seven years) and during that time the brothers and their wives watch carefully to make sure that no one house is less well equipped than any other; for no man knows which of the houses it will fall to his lot to own.

The drawing of lots and thereby the division of the property does not have to await the completion of the new houses. As in the towns and cities in Greece, a dwelling is considered habitable at what to an American view is an early stage in its construction. Villagers will live in a house in which the ground-level rooms still have earthen floors, in which there is no ceiling to hide the rafters and to exclude the earth and dust that the wind sends through the roof, in which only the outer stone walls have been completed and the inner walls have not yet been plastered or stuccoed. Even at that, the cost of labor and materials for the basic stone or brick shell of a two-story house in Vasilika can absorb the surplus cash from joint holding of some eighty *stremata* for two or three years.

Once it is agreed that the new houses are ready for occupancy and that the old house has been sufficiently improved, the moment for the separation has come. The farmers are then joined by any town brothers they may have and they sit down together to evaluate the patrimonial property. No women participate in the deliberations. First, the men examine their land resources and make up sets of holdings of equal value. For example, if there are three farming brothers, virtually all the patrimonial land will be divided into three parcels; one parcel may have an extra *stremata* of vineyard as compared to the other two parcels, but that will make up for the fact that the second and third parcels consist of cotton lands which are slightly more fertile than those assigned to the

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1

[Town Life]

621 369 Even in Athens-Piraeus this pattern is observed in many of the neighborhoods into which the two cities divide. The majority of Athenians live in suburbs which date back only to 1923 and the years immediately after, when tens of thousands of refugees from Asia Minor crowded into the town. Many of these communities have a strong corporate sense of their own, and live in much the same way as the smaller provincial towns [513] already described. In the central part of Athens, however, life pursues a rhythm more or less like that of any big European city except that here, too, the midday siesta is rigorously observed. Also, new suburbs, inhabited by professional people and employees, have in recent years grown up farther from the center of town; here little of the community spirit of the older suburbs is to be found, and life rather resembles the dormitory belt of a big American city.

369 517 275 The superabundant leisure so characteristic of village life is also apparent in the towns. *Cafeneions* are numerous and nearly always the sidewalk tables are well filled with men who obviously have no pressing business, if indeed they have any business at all. Street corners, curbs and squares are also occupied [435] by the poor, who cannot afford to pay for a seat by ordering a coffee, even though a modest 2½ drachmae (7 cents) will confer title to a table for an entire morning.

369 464 166 Every considerable town has a fringe of unemployed and semi-employed inhabitants, many of them migrants from villages who have come seeking some sort of job to supplement the inadequate income from their family farms. Such persons [434] can always go back to the village if need be, where at least they can have a roof over their heads and something to eat. Even when a man has been successful in finding regular employment in a town, and makes his home there, he often continues to maintain a connection with the village from which he, or his [602] father or grandfather, came. Family ties are very strong in

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Lofiscos

[Villages of the Plains]

than 400 stremmata of cultivated land. Presumably the owner had divided legal title among relatives or friends without surrendering real control of his land.)

The village is very small. In 1956 its population was only 130,[1] yet it occupies no less than 6,000 acres, excluding the absentee landowner's estate, which is counted as part of the lands of Lofiscos by official government reckoning. This amounts to more than 46 acres per capita; and even though more than half of the land remains rough pasture, subject to flooding for part of every year, such an abundance of land represents solid wealth by Greek peasant standards. And indeed, the village is wealthy. Farmers find little difficulty in accumulating gold sovereigns with which to dower their daughters, for wheat is always in demand and a government purchase scheme keeps the price stable and well above world market levels. In spite of the shabby appearance of their houses and the untidy appearance of their clothes, the families of Lofiscos are, by their own standards, very well off. Almost all of them probably have several hundred gold sovereigns hidden away, but this no stranger could ever expect to know.

The tribulations of the second world war, of the occupation and of the guerrilla war made almost no impression on Lofiscos. The young men served in the army, of course, and saw something of the outer world. But on their return they seemed to fit back smoothly into the familiar routine. As the guerrillas never

1. This and all subsequent figures for village populations are rough approximations. Village records do not include any sort of census figure. They are confined to registration of births, marriages and deaths, and the most important function they serve is to provide the basis for the annual call-up of military recruits. Moreover, a family often remains registered in a village long after it has moved away; in such instances births and deaths are likely to be omitted from the village books, and may or may not be recorded elsewhere. One must therefore depend upon informal estimates of village officials. This leaves a considerable margin for error, unless the officials consulted are unusually careful.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Lofiscos

[Villages of the Plains]

While I did not come to know the village well enough to be sure, my impression was that the decisive break-through in 1952 was not a matter of new knowledge or information so much as a change in financial attitudes. That is to say, before 1952 the peasants of Lofiscos looked upon indebtedness with horror. Anyone who went to a bank and of his own free will incurred a debt was, they felt, courting disaster. This was not far from the case in the 1920's and early 1930's when agricultural prices were uncertain, bank interest high, and foreclosure a possibility. In 1956 bank interest was still high – between 7 and 8 per cent for loans to individual farmers – but the price of wheat was fixed ahead of time by the government, and the price of fertilizer had been lowered by government subsidy. As a result, a simple computation could assure the borrower of what he stood to gain. This was what the farmers of Lofiscos learned in 1952. They allowed the Bank's representative to convince them that there were times and circumstances when borrowing was not the first step to perdition, but a sure (or nearly sure) way to greater income.

Farming in Lofiscos has always, for as long as men can recall, been mainly directed at market sale. Wheat from the village has gone to Volos or Larissa year after year, and, since 1920 at least, the peasants have been able to buy town products as they wanted them. But in general they have preferred hoarding to spending. In Turkish times, to build a comfortable new house or to dress elaborately would simply have attracted the attention of some hungry tax or rent collector; hence there was a strong motive for concealing behind an unpretentious, indeed poor-seeming, exterior any wealth that might accumulate. This attitude apparently survived under Greek administration, even after the peasants of the village ceased to owe rents to a landlord and secured the whole harvest as their own. It still lingers: hence the shabby appearance of the village and its inhabitants.

If the first important break with old traditional patterns of

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Nea Eleftherohori

[Villages of the Plains]

178 241 433 [243] was using fertilizer, and yields of wheat (the principal crop for which fertilizer was needed) had increased to between 125 and 180 okes per stremma, as against the former range of 60 to 80, depending of course on weather and variations in the quality of the land.

By 1956 "everybody"

Even before the war, the farmers of Nea Eleftherohori had shown themselves willing to try new crops. Thus in 1947 there were modest acreages in legumes, cotton and tobacco as well as 178 249 433 [656] [435] some vegetables. Only tobacco did well, since there was no irrigation; but government regulations forbade extension of tobacco acreage, in order to maintain prices. By 1956 this restriction had been removed for the district in which Nea Eleftherohori is situated, and the farmers promptly began to increase their tobacco planting. In 1947 there had been a total of 52 stremmata in tobacco; in 1955 there were 480, and in 1956 no less than 898. Tobacco has in fact become the main labor-consuming crop, and it has also become the all-important cash crop for the village. Money income has multiplied several times over [434] [241] with the spread of tobacco cultivation, for earlier, when wheat, raised without benefit of fertilizer, was the main crop, there was often very little left to sell after the families had supplied their own food needs.

178 241 464 [245] [452] A second major departure occurred in 1956. With the help of a bank loan, the village planted an olive grove on 900 stremmata of rough pasture. It will take ten years for the new trees to come into full production; but when they do, Nea Eleftherohori will have a new and valuable crop, with the special virtue of requiring labor at a season of the year when other agricultural operations are more or less at a standstill. By combining grain farming (requiring labor in the early fall for planting and in the late spring for the harvest) with tobacco raising (requiring intensive labor in the early spring and for about two months in the late summer when the leaves must be picked daily and

/8 cont./

Since the refugees settled the village changed its external and internal appearance. The pond in the center of the village was filled up with 1400 cubic meters of dirt. It was fenced and a war memorial monument was erected in the center of it. Many shrubs were planted /9/ and the acacia trees surround the whole park. Once a bathing spot for the lazy buffalo, it has become now a rendezvous place for the youth of the village. The refugees were not satisfied with the well water and through personal work brought running water to the village from the nearby hills. A large fountain was built in the square of the village and two more smaller ones in the neighborhoods. As soon as the water came to the village, at the inauguration ceremony, the village changed its name from Armoutchi (Pear bearing) to Megali Vrisi (Big Fountain).

Many of the Turkish houses were torn down and new houses with better roads and aesthetic appearance were put up. The whole village is covered with huge elm trees. The South Western part is occupied by the Thracians and the North by the Caucasians.

The Thracians are the only refugees who changed their homes for four times in less than 10 years and this last one may be the fifth. They are so discouraged in building big houses and leaving them every time to the enemy to destroy them that they all decided to erect one room houses with mud walls and ceiling made out of reeds. The cost of the material does not exceed more than $18 to $25. One of them once told me, "I left enough big houses to the enemy who destroyed them. This time I am going to destroy it before he comes in." When I laughed /10/ at his last remark, he shook his head and said. "You are too young yet to know the Balkans." No, I think he was right. Every Thracian family can carry everything they have on their backs. They simplified their lives, having only those things that are the most essential.

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/13 cont./ 175
the minaret was replaced by the church steeple but the storks kept 621
the same nests for many generations. No one knows so well the history of the village as the storks do. Language and religious differences have done more harm to humanity than any good. Human beings of the same Creator because of language and religious differences kill each other and take turns in occupying the village.

PART II. The Family. The focus of Megali Vrisi Life.

121

A functional study of the family offers the best method of understanding the compex behavior patterns operative in this institution. Moreover it is by such /14/ analysis that the significance of the family group in aculture may be determined.

The Economic Function.

The economic function of the families in Megali Vrisi com- 241
munity is very important and needs some consideration. Farming 594
is the only means of livelihood and consumes a large part of the time of men, women and children. The general procedure for gaining a livelihood has been fixed throughout centuries. Due to climatic conditions the type of crops that can be raised is limited and even some of these are prohibitive. A crop that in the past 249
brought them the largest income was opium poppies, a narcotic plant, but the League of Nations has prohibited the sale of this product. Another product that has many times left the farmer to speculate about future prospects in price was tobacco. This crop unlike many other crops that have followed the evolutionary type of adjustment, has tended to follow independently its sharp ups and downs. Tobacco, unlike other crops, involves a great amount [435]
of skilled labor and it is a product that is handled by a few manu- [464]
facturing companies that tend to set the price as they please. Both of the above crops are prohibited. The government-subsidized 243
/15/ wheat has replaced everything. Regardless of the effect of 654
this policy on the land, rotation principles and social effects on the

/15 cont./

people. This policy of the government has created more problems for the future generations to solve than confront the people at the present. The whole family concentrates its attention on wheat raising since its market and price are definitely fixed. The harvest rush seasons has made obligatory the work of women and children. Even younger children share the burden by either bringing drinking water, caring for the infants of the family or by collecting the fallen wheat heads. It is hard to give the age at which children are expected to do their share. It all depends on how important the need of the children are.

243 [654] [435] 857 243 464

Work of Wives.

Throughout the ages we find that women, besides doing the household work and raising children, share in the farm work. The women of Megali Vrisi more than any other women in the civilized world have become the real beasts of burden of village life. They have to get up early in the morning, prepare breakfast and prepare food for the whole day. As a matter of fact it is an accepted principle that women are selected as to their ability for working hard, bearing children, working at the loom and having the lips closed. These are the outstanding /16/ qualities that every woman is expected to have. Women in discussing or in gossiping about girls express their opinion as the outstanding quality of a girl, how tight her lips are, and the amount of time she spends at the loom. It is up to the parents to look up a girl for their son either within the village or from the neighboring villages. The son has to consent to what parents decide in this matter. In many instances it happens that the young man meets his wife for the first time on his wedding day. There are many reasons that usually lead the parents to decide for the marriage of their son.

562 [462] [581] [521] [584] 562 581 596

a. Need for extra labor in the fields and at home.
b. Desire of the father and mother to have grandchildren so they can train them before they are too old.
c. The desire of the parents to have someone in the house to take care of them.

Megali Vrisi

[Inventory at the beginning of the year- /43 cont./ taken from a representative farmer]

B. Livestock:	Number	Value in drachmas	
Cows	2	5,000	511
Oxen	2	8,000	422
Poultry	30	900	435
Turkeys	3	300	[231]
Hogs	1	250	
Bees	20	4,000	
		18,450	

C. Family food stuffs in storeroom: [251]

	Okes		
Wheat	300	2,100	
Lard	50	3,000	
Honey	10	300	/44/

D. Animal feed in store: [231]

	Okes	Value in Drachmas
Chick peas	200	800
Straw	1200	600
Barley	400	2,000
		8,800

E. Agricultural implements [241] [412]

	Number	
Plow	1	250
Yoke	1	90
Harrow	1	600
Barrels	3	450
Harrows	2	70
Shovels	1	30
Hatchet	1	60
Axes	1	80
Wagons	1	3,000
Sickles	2	50
		4,680
Total		31,930

/44 cont./ 511
Inventory at the end of the year. December 31st 1934. 422
435
Family. the same members as at the beginning. [231]

A. Livestock:	Number	Value in Drachmas
Cows	3	6,000
Oxen	2	8,000
Hens	20	600
Turkeys	3	300
Pigs	1	600
Bees	20	4,000
		19,500

B. Family food in store: [251]

	Okes	
Wheat	350	2,450
Lard	40	2,400
Honey	15	450
Onions	20	60
Beans	15	150
Cracked wheat cereal	40	400
		5,910

C. Animal feed in store: [231]

Straw	1,600	800
Corn	60	300
Chickpea	200	800
		1,900 /45/

D. Agricultural implements: [241] [412]

	Okes	Value in Drachmas
Plow	1	250
Yoke	1	90
Harrow	1	550
Barrels	3	450
Harrows	2	60
Shovel	1	30
Hatchets	1	60

511
241

/45 cont./

Sickle	2	40	
Axes	1	70	
Wagons	1	2.500	
			4.200
		Grand total	31.510

[422]
[435]
[412]

A one crop farm does not offer regular income year after year. Due to diversity of climatic conditions there are on the average 3 good years to one poor year. Because of the recent settlement of the farmers their needs are great not only for their families but also for their farms, such as tools, animals, stables, barns, better houses and payment of their loans. The poor years increase the debts of the farmer tremendously and if unable to pay them he tries to find a refuge by telling lies.

[426]
[577]

The Pattern of Land use. One of the greatest troubles that the farmer of Megali Vrisi has is in getting to and from his fields. His share of land which is composed of 45 stremas (10 1/2 acres), is divided into 7 fields. The smallest piece is 1/4 of an acre and the largest 2 acres. The government in its endeavor to give equal chance to all farmers has divided the land into /46/ 7 categories according to fertility and the distance from the village. Thus the nearest field is 1/5 of a mile and the farthest one is 4 1/2 miles. This type of division, besides consuming time to and from the fields and tiring the animals with unnecessary walking, also reduces the productiveness through poor management of the fields. Rotation is neglected since the farmers having their fields in certain section have to agree on crop plantation with their neighbors. The fencing of the individual fields is impossible and anyone can pasture any field after the crops are removed. There is a law that gives the right of pasturing the fields by anyone after the crops are removed.

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[484]

[439]

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We can summarize the good and bad points for such a distribution of land.

Advantages:

1. Gives equal opportunity to each farmer to have equal share of fertile as well as of infertile land.

Megali Vrisi

/48 cont./ Farm Implements. The average farmer has the following implements. 241 422 407 [412] [435]

1	Harrow	$3
1	Plow, iron	1.50
1	Wooden plow	1.00
1	Yoke	1.00
3	Hoes	0.35
2	Shovels	0.25
2	Sickles	0.35

The above are the implements which the farmer uses in his farming. Borrowing of tools and implements is extensively practiced [474] by the farmers. Some of the implements and machinery that are too expensive to be owned by one farmer are owned cooperatively such as seed cleaning machine, harrow and harvesting machines. This cooperative movement is very successful and solves some of their pressing economic problems. Some of the implements are [326] made locally and all repairs are done by the local blacksmith. [445]

/49/ Domestic Animals. The livestock problem is one which 233 is still in its infancy. All the sheep are owned by the Thracians and they are increasing them every year. The sheep is the competitor of the cow. A farmer can live without sheep but cannot do [492] without cows, since the only source of power is the cow. The [578] feeling between the sheep owners and the rest of the farmers is not very good, and may develop into a very critical conflict if steps are not taken ahead of time to prevent it. Since pasturing the [423] fields and community pasture is free to any one, the sheep take advantage of this law and get the greatest benefit in competition with the cows.

The local cows are a mixture of the scrubby Macedonian breed and so far no attempt was made to improve the livestock.

One solution discussed for solving some of the pressing problems of livestock is by taxation as follows:

1. No tax should be paid by the sheep up to 12 head.
2. 12 to 25 heads 15 cents per head.
3. 25 to 40 " 30 " " "
4. 40 to 80 " 75 " " "

/51 cont./

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Receipts Expenditures and Balances. The following account is more or less representative of the receipts expenditures and balances of the farmer.

General farm accounts of income and expenses.

A. Income	Amount, Okes	Value in Drachmas
Wheat	840	5.040
Wheat seed	400	3.200
Wheat sold	2.560	17.920
Turkeys	36	3.600
Veg. & legumes		560
Watermelons sold		1.760
Milk (consumed at home)	300	2.100
Poultry (consumed at home)	8	320
Poultry sold	20	400
Cereal consumed	30	360
Eggs	200	200
Eggs sold	700	700
Lard consumed	40	1.600
Wool used	20	600
Wool sold	50	1.500
Corn consumed	100	400
Chick peas used	200	800
Straw used	3.000	1.500
Barley	200	800
Butter from cows sold		800
Heifers sold	1	1.200
	Total	46.160

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B. Expenses:	Amount in Okes	Value in Drachmas
Bread for the family (produced)	840	5.040
Wheat seed (produced)	400	3.200
Legumes	60	180
Vegetables		
Spinach	20	40
Onions	40	80
Beans	2	20
Potatoes	60	240
Vegetables bought		2.540
Milk (produced)	300	2.100
Poultry (produced)	8	320
Cereal	30	360
Eggs	200	200
Lard	40	400
Honey	20	600
Olives, macaroni sugar salt purchased		2.037
Clothing for family		6.227
General expenses, newspapers, travel, books		1.761
Doctor bills		530
Furniture and repairs		2.500
Animal feed: (produced)		
Corn	100	400
Chick peas	200	800
Straw	3.000	1.500
Barley	200	800
Agricultural implements bought		180
Fruit trees bought		400
Fuel (wood & kerosene)		1.085

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/52 cont./

Stable & straw room built	6,000
Opened a well	3,000
Deposit in the savings bank	2,000
Total	46,160 = $262

From the above accounts we find that the largest single item of income is from wheat, which comprises over 60% of the whole income. This shows the importance of the crop not only for market but for the family consumption. Even in the expense accounts wheat used for /53/ bread is one of the largest items. Next to wheat come the animal products and the animals. One can easily see that the basic diet of the farmers is bread. 840 okes, or 2362.80 pounds of wheat makes 3544.20 lbs. of bread for four persons a year or 886.05 lbs of bread per person per year or 2.5 lbs. of bread daily per person. This is not the highest, but a little below the average.

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[262]

In the expense account we find clothing and building construction the largest expense items. The 6,227 drs. are spent, in a year, for clothing the family. This is above the average. Usually the clothing bill runs low, depending on the amount of cloth mothers can weave. Even though a large part of the cloth is produced in the village still the yarn has to be bought from the market.

[286]
[438]

Next to this the largest cash bill is that of the doctors. This fluctuates from year to year, depending on the intensity and extensiveness of malaria and other diseases.

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The vegetable crop is another item that needs some explanation. The farmer produced only 15% of his vegetable consumption. Lack of knowledge of vegetable growing forces him to this extra expense. The soil and climate are suitable for him to raise enough varieties /54/ of vegetables the year around. This is proved by the fact that the vegetables he buys are produced locally by specialized vegetable gardeners.

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/54 cont./

According to his expense accounts he produced 85% of food stuffs and almost all of his seed. This shows how self sufficient the farmer of Megali Vrisi is and if he raised his vegetables too, there would be very few food articles bought from the market. 241 511

This representative farmer experiencing the prosperous year of 1934 was able besides spending for construction of a stable and a well, to deposit in the bank 2,000 drs. so as to have them during the lean years. [454]

Government Subsidy of Wheat Production

During the twentieth century the governments of various countries have introduced certain methods to regulate production, consumption and export. Some of these principles have had temporary successes and some others have failed. These governmental controls have in many instances created social changes and economic difficulties. The adoption of one crop enterprise and the creation of leisure seasons due to prohibition of certain other crops have made it difficult for the farmers to fit themselves in the new scheme of life. By subsidizing the wheat crop and fixing its market price the government has persuaded the farmers to plant only /55/ wheat and neglect rotation and other crops. 241 461 [654] [435]

Wheat being a seasonal crop provides ample leisure time for the farmer and thus ample spending periods. He is unable to find anything to occupy his time for something productive and useful in his occupation. Thus many people during the winter months leave the village for outside work. The girls in most cases find work in tobacco districts and the men in road construction. The conditions under which the girls and the men work are very poor and unhealthy, many returning home with poor health. It is a big problem with one crop farming to find something to absorb the leisure time of the farmers. [464] [499] [466]

The few experiments which were conducted in cooperation with the farmers of raising irrigated alfalfa and vetch and the introduction of dairy farming threw a hopeful light on what could be done to intensify agriculture so as to absorb all the available labor. [246] [234]

/94 cont./
the evening they sit in the coffee houses, either reading newspapers, chatting politics, playing cards, or playing tavli, (a game which is played in the Near East countries). At these slack seasons visiting /95/ takes place within the village mostly by women who take their knitting and gossip. The men visit distant villages where they happen to have relatives. It is surprising to find how much this distant visiting carries back and forth either methods of agriculture or exchange of seed or discussion of community organization plans. Nothing like distant visiting could be more profitable to the visitor and to the visited relative. It is costly and seldom done by women.

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Bazaars. Twice a week the bazaar or market takes place at the nearby towns of Kilkis and Herson. Every farmer, whether or not he has worked, has to go to bazaar. Those that go for shopping, take with them either poultry, eggs, cheese, butter, wheat, oats, barley, chickpea, a pig, a heifer, a cow, a calf, or an ox. No villager who goes to bazaar will ever go without some agricultural product. The price of the above mentioned commodities depends on the amount brought to the bazaar and the number of merchants present on that day. Price is set by the supply and demand of the day. The farmers go to and from bazaar loaded. Usually they carry the load on their shoulders or use an animal. In exchange for their agricultural products they get /96/ kerosene, thread, buttons, needles, rice, sugar, tea, dried fish, beans, candy, olives, olive oil, soap and salt. Most farmers hang around the bazaar corners, watch the bargaining tricks of livestock merchants, visit friends from other villages, buy and sell oxen, or watch the bazaar price for different commodities. For many a farmer these bazaars are reliable centers of information to know how he can advantageously exchange his goods with the needs of his family. Most farmers seldom use money for buying goods to meet their family needs. Based on long experience, the farmer found it safer to keep his goods rather than money. Money he thinks creates more enemies than anything else.

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